

MONTHLY OFFERING

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VOL. II.]

MARCH.

[NO. III.]

BY JOHN A. COLLINS.

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MONTHLY OFFERING.

—MARCH—

Slavery.

BY R. HILDRETH.

4. *Means of enforcing the Master's Empire.* To sustain an empire of the kind above described, it is evident that the most vigorous means must be essential.

The means employed are chiefly three, to wit : *force, fear, fraud*; and according to the different tempers, talents, habits, and notions of the master, one or the other of these three means is made the key of his system.

I. **FORCE.** Those masters whose tempers are harsh, violent, and brutal, especially those who have never been softened by education, and who are strangers to the refinements of cultivated life, and others who are endowed with a firm, decided vigor, that moves directly to the point, and by the shortest way, rely principally upon force.

Is the slave late in coming into the field ? Twenty lashes. Is he idle ? Thirty lashes. Does he disobey or neglect an order ? Forty lashes. Does he negligently waste or destroy his master's property ? Fifty lashes. Is he detected in a lie ? Sixty lashes. Is he strongly suspected of theft ? Seventy lashes. Does he say or do any thing that can be construed into insolence ? Eighty lashes. Is he guilty of the slightest act of insubordination ? One hundred lashes. Does he venture to run away ? Let him be pursued by men and dogs, disabled by small shot, and so soon as he is taken, be flogged till he faints, then be worked in chains, locked up every night, and kept on half allowance, till his spirits are broken, and he becomes obedient and *contented*. Should he dare, upon any occasion, to offer any resistance ? Let him be shot, stabbed, beat to the ground with a club; and should he not be killed in the process, as soon as he is so far recovered as to be able to stand, let him be subjected to all the discipline mentioned in the preceding sentence, and in addition, be flogged every night, for thirty days in succession.

Such is a brief specimen of this system of plantation management, which some call cruel, but which those who follow it, merely describe as vigorous and efficient.

II. FEAR. But there are many men, naturally soft-hearted, who cannot look without some feelings of sympathetic pain, or at least of instinctive disgust, upon the body of an old man, or a woman perhaps, cut up with the lash, and scored with bloody gashes. The screams and outcries of the victims affect them disagreeably. They lack that harsh, unfeeling vigor, that stern promptitude, tyranny's steadiest and most efficient support. They endeavor to avoid the actual use of the whip, and to govern as far as possible, by the fear of it. They utter most tremendous threats, and strive to supply by bitter and alarming words, the place of action. But words, when they are found to be intended only as scare-crows, soon lose their efficacy. It is therefore necessary to maintain a steady stream, and the master who governs upon this wordy plan, soon comes to keep both himself and his slaves in a constant state of irritation and ill-feeling, by a process of fault-finding, scolding and threats, which becomes a habit, and goes on from morning to night, from day to day, from one year's end to another.

The slaves, who are thus made to feel every moment the weight of tyranny, and the humiliation of servitude, contract towards these snarling masters the sincerest hate; and from hating, being soon satisfied that with all their bluster, they have not the vigor to act up to their threats, they come presently to despise them. Whether they do well or ill, it is much the same, the master scolds on by habit; but though he scolds, as yet he does not punish; and the bolder among the slaves soon begin to try experiments upon his patience. They are encouraged by the impunity of first transgressions to take greater and greater liberties. Their example finds imitators, till presently the whole plantation falls into a state of idleness and insubordination, which cannot be longer overlooked or endured.

The master must now give up the hope of revenue

from his slaves, or he must re-establish his authority. He begins with moderate whippings. But his first attempts in this way are laughed at, or perhaps resisted. He is alarmed and inflamed. Anger and fear supply a vigor he does not naturally possess. He storms and raves; flogs without mercy; shoots, stabs, chains, imprisons, starves, tortures. His nature seems to be changed, and for a while he acts out the tyrant, in the most vindictive spirit of despotism. The slaves bend and bow beneath this whirlwind of tyranny. The most turbulent and unmanageable,—those of them at least, who have escaped with their lives,—are sent off and sold; and presently things subside into their former state. The master grows ashamed of his violence, and perhaps endures some twinges of remorse; the lash is disused, and the tongue supplies its place. The discipline of the plantation is presently relaxed; the servants become idle and insubordinate as before; but this flattering calm cannot be relied upon; a new storm of tyranny is secretly brewing, which will burst at a moment when it is least expected.

III. FRAUD. There are some masters, who pride themselves upon their cunning and superior knowledge of human nature, who make considerable use of fraud, in the management of their slaves; but this is a means employed only occasionally, and of which the efficacy is not great.

One of the most usual applications of it, is the attempt to take advantage of the religious feelings of the slaves, and to impress them with the idea, that obedience, honesty towards their masters, humble submission, and other like plantation virtues, are religious duties, which God commands under the penalty of damnation.

This stratagem is chiefly practiced by slave-holding clergymen and church-members. The religious people of the South have been at the pains of preparing a slave catechism; in some places they have established slave Sunday schools; and meetings for slave-worship are regularly held. The immediate agents in these proceedings, are generally men of good intentions, but of very feeble

understandings. They are mere tools in the hands of crafty hypocrites. The motive of their labors is doubtless the spiritual welfare of the slaves; but those by whom they are supported and encouraged, however tender a regard they may have for the salvation of their own souls, look upon religion among slaves merely as a means of plantation discipline; and please themselves with the idea that the more religious their slaves are, the easier they may be managed.

The agents employed in this double service of Christianity and despotism, often succeed in kindling a warm spirit of devotion in the hearts of the slaves; but they have often occasion to deplore the inconsistency, the back-sliding, the delusion of their converts, who cannot be made to realize in its full extent, the enormous sinfulness of any attempt to elude that tyranny under which Providence requires them patiently, and even joyfully to submit.

Deeply sympathizing with the sad, and almost angry feelings, with which these pious people are accustomed to lament the small success of their labors, and to accuse that stony-heartedness and inherent depravity which prevents even the converted slaves from attaining to the perfection of humility and obedience, the remark nevertheless may with all due deference, be permitted,—that so long as these pious teachers are able to construe the generous precepts of the gospel into an apology and a justification for tyranny, it cannot be considered very surprising that their pupils among the slaves, should instinctively acquire the art of reconciling with Christian patience and submission, any and every means, whereby they can shake off, alleviate, or elude the usurped authority of their masters.

But this piece of pious fraud is falling into bad odor at the South. It has been found that religion causes an excitement among the slaves, both dangerous and troublesome. The rascals preach and pray when they ought to be working. Besides, that religious enthusiasm, which kindles so readily in the most ignorant as well as the

most cultivated minds, gives rise to a dangerous exaltation of soul which makes the subjects of it obstinate and unmanageable. Religion once awakened in such savage and untaught bosoms, is apt to degenerate into a superstitious fanaticism. The gifted and the artful begin to see visions, and to dream dreams. They are not content with being hearers and pupils, they aspire to be speakers and teachers. In their sermons and exhortations, it is the vices, the luxury, the cruelty, the wickedness of the masters, upon which they principally dwell, and whence they draw examples and illustrations; and who knows but some one more enraptured than the rest, may imagine himself called, like Moses of old, to smite the task-master, and to lead forth the oppressed children?

For these reasons, the Bible has been proscribed at the South, as an incendiary publication; a book not fit for slaves to read or hear. In some parts of the country the catechism is looked upon with almost equal suspicion; and many masters forbid their slaves to hear any preacher, black or white, since they consider religion upon a plantation as quite out of place, a thing dangerous to the master's authority, and therefore not to be endured in the slave.

Another stratagem, occasionally employed, when it is desired to stimulate the efforts of the slaves, is the distribution of little prizes among those who accomplish the greatest labor in the shortest time. This contrivance works wonderfully well for a few days; but as soon as it is discovered who are the ablest workmen, the emulation is confined to them, and the greater number, who have no chance to win the prize, presently relapse into their former apathy. Besides, this distribution of prizes, is apt to give rise among the slaves, to the inconvenient notion, that they ought to be paid for working, and the moment it ceases, they work more grudgingly, unwillingly and negligently than ever. Moreover it is expensive; in the minds of most planters, a decisive objection against it.

But there are cases when force and terror cannot be

employed, or fail to answer the purpose, and where stratagem is necessarily resorted to. The most common of these cases, are the detection and prevention of theft, and the recovery of runaways.

Upon these occasions, the most respectable and religious masters do not hesitate to descend to every petty art of fraud and falsehood. They have hired spies and informers among the slaves ; they blacken their own faces, and lurk in disguise about the cabins, peeping through the cracks, and listening at the doors. They lure the fugitives back into their power, by the most ample promises of pardon, which they break with as little hesitation as they make them. Not uncommonly they attempt to take advantage of the superstitious ignorance of the slaves, and pretend to magical and supernatural powers, in hopes of frightening the culprit into confession. They exult over the success of these fraudulent arts ; and in all transactions with their slaves, their total want of respect for their own word has given ample occasion for the proverb common among the unprivileged class, which describes white men as "mighty uncertain."

Of the three principal means above enumerated, and briefly explained, upon which the sustentation of the slave-master's empire depends, it is evident that the first involves the second ; for the surest way of striking a deep terror into the heart is, to punish every transgression with a stern and unrelenting severity.

It accordingly happens that those who act upon this plan, not only have the least trouble upon their plantations, but are often comparatively popular, so to speak, with their servants. The certainty of punishment greatly diminishes the necessity of its frequent infliction. The slaves know exactly what to expect ; how far they can go ; and what is the limit they cannot safely transgress. If the rule is an iron one, it is nevertheless steady and sure. It does not partake of that uncertainty, which besides being a dangerous temptation, is in itself one of the greatest of evils. Slaves are like other men ; and in general they far prefer to take a punishment, and have it

over, to being perpetually scolded, threatened, cursed and stormed at, even though there may be hope that the storm will end in words, and pass over without raining blows.

But this regular and systematic discipline, resembling the despotic precision of a well drilled army, is to be found only upon a very few plantations. Most masters and most overseers are too negligent, or too good-humored for their business, or else are ignorant of the real nature, and only sure support of the authority they exercise. They overlook some offences because they do not want the trouble of punishment ; some they permit to go unnoticed, because they hate to flog a woman or a child ; some allowances they make for the petulance of old age, or the hot temper of youth. But every liberty that goes unpunished is made a pretence for yet greater liberties ; the slaves, always eager and watchful to regain any particle of freedom, perceive in an instant, and with unerring sagacity, every indication of weakness, or want of vigor on the part of their master ; they artfully break, now this link, and now that, from their chains ; till at length, beginning to feel something of the spirit of liberty, their "insolence," to use the master's phrase, becomes intolerable, and waking from his dream of indulgence and good nature, their despot is obliged to vindicate his authority, and to repress the licentiousness of his slaves, by a sudden outbreak of violence and cruelty, which, however, he may excuse it by the plea of necessity, he cannot think of, in his sober moments, without some disagreeable feelings of self-condemnation.

Thus it is that the greater part of Southern plantations are the scenes of a constant struggle ; idleness, encroachments, a passive resistance upon one side ; negligence and yielding first, then passion, violence and cruelty upon the other.

Despotism in America.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

IN SENATE, FEB. 22. 1842.

The Joint Special Committee to whom was committed the petition of Francis Jackson and others, and sundry other petitioners, for a law securing to colored persons equal rights in railroad accommodation :—also the remonstrance of Joseph Nunn and sundry others, of Salem, respectfully submit the subjoined

REPORT :

The circumstances which give rise to these petitions, are matters of common notoriety throughout the State. While some of the rail-road corporations (as for example, the Western, Nashua, Boston and Portland, Norwich, Lowell and Worcester,) make no distinction among the passengers, but permit every well-behaved person to purchase such ticket, whether of the second or first class, as they choose, and then select the car and seat which suit them; others,—which are the Eastern Rail-road, Taunton and New-Bedford, and Providence,—while they in some cases demand of the colored man their highest price, place him either, as on the Salem road, in a decently furnished car by himself, or, as in other cases, in cars oftentimes neither decent nor comfortable, and, according to circumstances, exposed to the inclemencies of the season. The petitioners ask for some action on the part of the Legislature, by which the making of this distinction between colored and other citizens, shall be forbidden by law, and prevented by penalty. They base their request, not on the supposition that the colored man is not as well treated as his white fellow-citizen, but on the broad principle, that the Constitution allows no distinction in the public privileges among the different classes of citizens of this Commonwealth.

That the distinction is made in the cases referred to, admits of no doubt. That it is a violation of his rights as a citizen, is equally undeniable :—that it is a disability which would be an insult to any white man, and which the whole nation would be ready to vindicate, at the ex-

pense of her best blood and greatest treasure. It is inconsistent with that part of the first article of the declaration of rights in the Constitution of our State, which declares "that all men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential and unalienable rights, among which may be reckoned," "that of acquiring, possessing and protecting property;" and "that of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness." The delay and difficulty the colored man experiences in travelling in public conveyances, frequently interfere with his acquiring property, when he wishes to pass from place to place on business. It interferes with his happiness when he travels for pleasure, and he is deprived of the Society of his friends, if they chance to be of a different complexion.

The only questions for consideration seem to be, whether this matter lies within the authority of the Legislature, and whether any interference on its part is called for.

That it is the duty, as well as the right of the Legislature, to secure to each citizen, not only his own strict rights, but also the greatest possible benefit, consistent with justice and the public good, is not to be questioned. These roads exist, and derive all their rights and privileges from the authority of the Legislature. They are certainly to be regarded, as far as the citizens are concerned, as public highways, to the equal use of which, on certain conditions, every citizen is alike entitled. Responsible to the Legislature for their proceedings, as appears by their being required to exhibit an annual report of their doings, they are to be regarded in some sense as public servants, and imperatively bound to use the powers intrusted to them as much for the public benefit as their own, in accordance with the spirit of our institutions and the laws of the Commonwealth. Any invidious distinction between different classes of citizens, in consequence of difference in opinion, sex, color, sect, or other rightful and innocent peculiarity, is manifestly opposed to the spirit of our institutions. If passengers were separated because of difference in religious belief; if, on

the common highway, certain persons were not permitted to travel without appearing in a particular dress, it would be regarded as ridiculous, and an intolerable nuisance to be immediately abated. Is color any more legal or reasonable ground of such distinction than creed? Massachusetts, through her whole code, with one exception, makes no distinction on account of color among her citizens. Her schools, her jurybox, her official situations, are all open to all complexions. The word white, except in the militia, where she acknowledges the authority of the United States Constitution, and the instance just named, is not found in her statute book. Why should she allow corporations a power which she will not trust in her own courts! How shall the State be justified in allowing others to make differences in regard to her citizens, which she does not presume to make herself? If it should be objected, these by-laws are like the rules of social life, with which the law has nothing to do; we answer, these corporations are established by State authority, supported in some cases by State loans, protected always and specially by legislation, and their accommodations are a *right*, and not, like social enjoyments, a *privilege*: the *equal* right of all, not the peculiar privilege of any.

If it should be objected that the regulation of matter of taste, which the feelings of the majority of the community require,—we answer, individual taste is no criterion of rights; and even if the majority do agree in this particular, our institutions were established for the very purpose of protecting minorities from the tastes of the majorities. That no real reason even of this kind exists, is evident from the fact that the majority of the rail-roads, and those too the largest, make no such distinction, and experience no inconvenience from the absence of it. Besides, even where this distinction has been made on some roads, your Committee are informed that slaves have been permitted to ride with their masters unmolested, where a free colored person is refused a place. That, under certain circumstances, color can be dispensed with; and there-

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fore that such exclusion is unreasonable and unnecessary.

Your Committee are of opinion that the rail-road corporations would most cheerfully submit to any regulation in this matter that should be agreeable to the Legislature. The Eastern rail-road company forbid a white man to take a seat in the car devoted to the use of the colored people; we can see in this nothing but an unnecessary assumption of authority, which the people of this Commonwealth will not acquiesce in. If any shall object to taking action upon this subject because custom contrary to law will not be unnoticed by our courts of justice, and therefore an adequate remedy exists already for any person injured by these regulations; we would say, that in many cases where rights were clear at common law, the Legislature has still enacted special statutes to secure the observance of such rights, and protect them by penalties. As a case in point, we notice the protection of these very rail-roads from trespass by persons and cattle. Many criminal statutes are directed against cases which had long been known as offences at common law. Your Committee are informed that in one case at least before the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth, under circumstances of much hardship, the Judge permitted the prevalence of this custom of excluding colored men from the same accommodations with white passengers, to be given in evidence before the jury as defence against the party's claim for damages—the case of a Brazilian officer, whose invalid wife had been refused decent accommodations on board one of our steamboats, some few years since, because she was in part of African descent. The prevalence of this custom was pleaded by the company against his claim of damages, and that successfully. The irritation of feeling which such regulations produce, tending to constant breaches of the peace, is another reason for legislative action. We need only allude to the recent cases that have occurred in proof of this. Our courts recognize a limitation in the almost sacred freedom of the press, when it amounts to libel, because then it tends to breach of the peace,—certainly

this instance of the same and still more imminent danger of that result, calls as loudly for the interference of the law. Certainly it cannot be out of the sphere of our duties to attempt such legislation as shall secure to all the inhabitants of the State the enjoyment of every right consistent with justice and the Constitution. The Committee unanimously report the accompanying bill.

Per order.

S. SPRAGUE, JR

AN ACT

Relating to the Rights of Rail-Road Passengers.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows :

SEC. 1. No rail-road corporation shall, by themselves, their directors, or others, make or establish any by-law or regulation, which shall make any distinction, or give a preference in accommodation to any one or more persons over others, on account of descent, sect, or color.

SEC. 2. Any officer or servant of any rail-road corporation, who shall assault any person for the purpose of depriving him of his right or privilege, in any car or other rail-road accommodation, on account of descent, sect, or color, or shall aid or abet any other person, in committing such assault, shall be punished by imprisonment in the county jail not less than six days, or by fine not less than ten dollars ; and shall also be answerable to the person assaulted, to the full amount of his damage in an action of trespass.

From the Madison County Abolitionist.

Keep it before the People---

That there are 2,500,000 slaves in the United States.
That these are bought and sold like cattle in the market.
That in 1836, Virginia sold 60,000 of her own children, at a valuation of \$24,000,000.

Keep it before the People—That slavery has twenty-five representatives upon the floor of Congress, as the representatives of *property*.

Keep it before the People—That Ohio, under the old ratio of representation, with a free population of 200,000 more than Virginia, had two members less than Virginia.

Keep it before the People—That Pennsylvania, with a free population, equal almost to South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Kentucky, will have, according to the new ratio, say 60,000, twenty-eight representatives, while these states will have forty-three!

Keep it before the People—That New York, with a population of 2,428,919, is to have forty representatives, while the thirteen slave States, with a free population of less than double that of New York, will have ninety-seven representatives in Congress!

Keep it before the People—That the free population of the North, is 9,653,762; and will have on the floor of Congress, one hundred and fifty-four representatives; while the South, with a free population of 4,812,873—less than half—is to have ninety-seven! Whereas, if the ratio of representation was based upon free population only, their number would be seventy-three.

Keep it before the People—That the distribution of the revenue, from the sale of the public lands, say \$3,000,000 per annum, is made according to the electoral vote, instead of the free population. So that the slave States receive, for a free population less than half in number to those of the free States, twice as much of the revenue, in proportion to the population.

Instance—Free population of the free States, 9,653,762. Dividend, \$1,815,026.

Free population of the slave States, 4,812,873. Dividend, \$1,181,702.

The injustice of this division may be clearly seen, when it is remembered that of the money thus distributed, the people of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Michigan get, to each inhabitant, 18 1-8 cents; while South Carolina gets 32 1-6; Georgia, 28; Alabama, 28; Louisiana, 28; Ken-

tucky, 22; and Tennessee, 22 cts. to each inhabitant. And thus ends the great "Distribution-Bill" of the Whigs.

Keep it before the People—That this legislation of which so much is said in behalf of the party in power, is giving the South a *premium* for slavery. Not only tolerating it, but taking money belonging to hard-working men of the North, to pay southern men for their institution.

Keep it before the People—That the surplus revenue was distributed in the same way, in 1837, and no protest was entered by any man on the floor of Congress.

Keep it before the People—That for forty out of forty-eight years, slavery has had a President from her own territory.

Keep it before the People—That for thirty out of thirty-six years, we have had a slave-holding Speaker in the House of Representatives, who has the appointment of all the Committees.

Keep it before the People—That since 1830, there have been five appointments to the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States, and every one from slave States.

Keep it before the People—That the District of Columbia is the greatest slave mart in the world; and that on the pages of its statute-book, among other laws, bloody as death, stands unrepealed the following: "a slave convicted of setting fire to a building, shall have his head cut off, and his body divided and hung up in the most public places."

See Laws of the District.

Keep it before the People—That such a law makes a *model* of our republic, for Prince Metternich to laugh at, and to give his public criminals the choice of working in the State mines *for life*, or being banished to the United States; and to know that they chose the former.—(See Brooks' Letters from Austria.)

Keep it before the People—That from 1826 to 1829, six persons were sold for their jail fees, in the District of Columbia; and that on the 8th of February, 1836, eighty-two northern Congressmen voted "that Congress ought not, in any way, interfere with slavery in the District of Columbia."

Nehemiah Caulkins.

Concluded.

In stating the foregoing facts, my object has been to show the practical workings of the system of slavery, and if possible to correct the misapprehension on this subject, so common at the north. In doing this I am not at war with slaveholders. No, my soul is moved for them as well as for the poor slaves. May God send them repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth! Principle, on a subject of this nature, is dearer to me than the applause of men, and should not be sacrificed on any subject, even though the ties of friendship may be broken. We have too long been silent on this subject, the slave has been too much considered, by our northern states, as being kept by necessity in his present condition.—Were we to ask, in the language of Pilate, “what evil hath they done”—we may search their history, we cannot find that they have taken up arms against our government, nor insulted us as a nation—that they are thus compelled to drag out a life in chains! subjected to the most terrible inflictions if in any way they manifest a wish to be released.—Let us reverse the question. What evil has been done to them by those who call themselves masters? First let us look at their persons, “neither clothed nor naked”—I have seen instances where this phrase would not apply to boys and girls, and that too in winter. I knew one young man seventeen years of age, by the name of Dave, on Mr. Swan’s plantation, worked day after day in the rice machine as naked as when he was born. The reason of his being so, his master said in my hearing, was, that he could not keep clothes on him—he would get into the fire and burn them off.

Follow them next to their huts; some with and some without floors :—Go at night, and view their means of lodging, see them lying on benches, some on the floor or ground, some sitting on stools, dozing away the night;—others, of younger age, with a blanket wrapped about them; and one or two lying in the ashes. These things *I have often seen with my own eyes.*

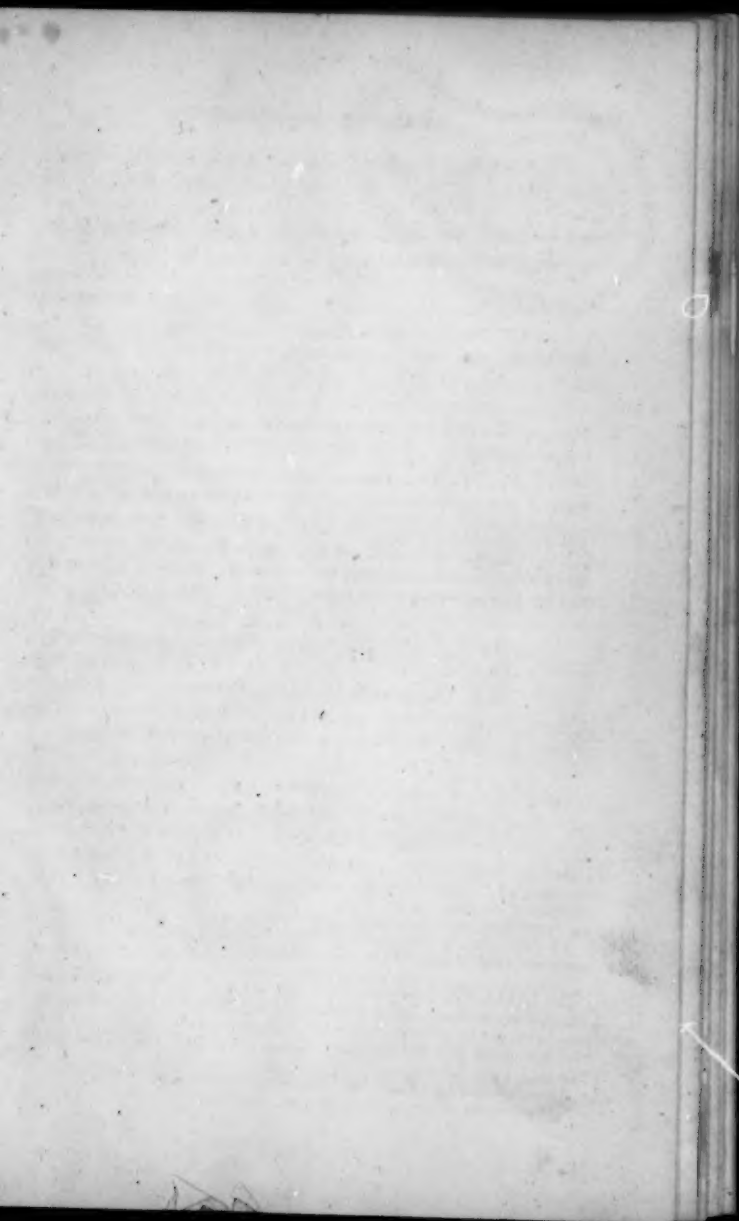
Examine their means of subsistence, which consists generally of seven quarts of meal or eight quarts of small rice for one week; then follow them to their work, with driver and overseer pushing them to the utmost of their strength, by threatening and whipping.

If they are sick from fatigue and exposure, go to their huts, as I have often been and see them groaning under a burning fever or pleurisy, lying on some straw, their feet to the fire with barely a blanket to cover them; or on some boards nailed together to form a bedstead.

After seeing all this, and hearing them tell of their sufferings, need I ask, is there any evil connected with their condition? and if so; upon whom is it to be charged? I answer for myself, and the reader can do the same. Our government stands first chargeable for allowing slavery to exist, under its own jurisdiction. Second, the states for enacting laws to secure their victim. Third, the slaveholder for carrying out such enactments, in horrid form enough to chill the blood. Fourth, every person who knows what slavery is, and does not raise his voice against this crying sin, but by silence gives consent to its continuance, is chargeable with guilt in the sight of God. "The blood of Zacharias who was slain between the temple and altar," says Christ, "WILL I REQUIRE OF THIS GENERATION." NEHEMIAH CAULKINS.

Rail Road Bill.

☞ We give in this No. the excellent report and resolves reported to the Legislature by a joint committee, for the House and Senate. C. F. Adams, son of the venerable J. Q. Adams, was a member of the committee. This report was lost in the Senate. We shall have something to say on this subject in another number.



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The Offering

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